



311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Control Number: # 18-16
Obsoletes AT 16-20

Effective Date: Immediately
Issuance Date: February 20, 2018

TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND CASE MANAGERS

FROM: NICHOLETTE SMITH-BLIGEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *N. Smith-Bligen*

RE: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA) – GOOD CAUSE FROM
WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR CUSTOMERS WHO ARE HOMELESS

PROGRAM AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

SUMMARY

This Action Transmittal provides new guidance and policy for determining when applicants and recipients of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) may be experiencing a family crisis and should be given good cause from the TCA work requirements. FIA considers a housing crisis and/or homelessness to be a family crisis and grounds for good cause from the work requirements. As always, Family Investment Administration (FIA) case managers should assess whether a family has barriers to work to ensure that FIA provides adequate referrals and resources to assist the family in removing barriers to self-sufficiency.

The TCA manual has been updated to reflect current policy.

Please note Action Transmittal 16-20 is now obsolete.

ACTION REQUIRED

Case managers should consider whether a family is experiencing a family crisis when determining whether a family can be given good cause from the TCA work requirements. A family crisis, such as a housing crisis or homelessness, threatens normal family functioning, and thus is considered good cause to not participate in required work activity.

The TCA policy manual has been updated to include a list of situations that are considered a family crisis. Family crisis now includes situations in which a family is in a housing crisis and/or experiencing homelessness.

When specifically evaluating a housing crisis or homelessness, the following situations are considered good cause for not participating in a work activity:

- Eviction, foreclosure, or other loss of housing
- Substandard housing that threatens the health and safety of the family
- Living in an emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, motel, or hotel
- Staying in a place not meant for humans to live or sleep (i.e. street, cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or similar settings)
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, which prevents consistent participation in the minimum, required, work activity hours

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and there may be additional situations where a family's housing crisis may prevent them from successfully participating in a work activity and grounds for good cause from the TCA work requirements.

At the end of a 30-day good cause period, the case manager must assess the family's progress in removing the housing barrier. A local department of social services may choose to allow an additional 30 days of good cause and provide additional help in finding housing for the family.

It is the case manager's responsibility to provide families with adequate referrals to homeless resources, affordable housing, and other community resources and to ensure that the family is receiving the proper support needed to assist in addressing the family's barriers. The case manager should clearly outline any resources provided and/or referrals made in the family's Family Independence Plan (FIP).

FIA TRAINING

FIA's Bureau of Training will provide two webinar trainings reviewing this policy clarification on:

1. Wednesday, March 7
2. Thursday, March 8

Registration links will be forwarded by February 23, 2018 to Training Coordinators.

INQUIRIES

Please direct TCA policy questions to fia.policy@maryland.gov. For TCA Work programs contact Shomare Braxton at 410-767-7940 or shomare.braxton@maryland.gov.

ATTACHMENTS

- TCA Manual Sections 401 and 402

cc: DHS Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHS Help Desk